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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DELAURO CALLS FOR CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN HEALTH CARE, MEDICAL RESEARCH, COMMUNITY SERVICES**

***Washington, DC***— Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro (CT-3), Ranking Member on the Labor, Education, Health, and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, made the following opening statement at the Appropriations Hearing for the FY12 Budget request of the Department of Health and Human Services.

***As Prepared for Delivery***

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Madam Secretary, for joining us today to discuss this budget request.

Let me begin by saying how much I support your mission and the good work you are doing at Health and Human Services. HHS is our “principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services.” The work of the Agency has always reflected our nation’s priorities and the highest moral obligation of our government—providing health care services, educating our children, and advancing scientific research to find the cures of tomorrow.

On health care, your budget seeks to lower health care costs for American families. In that regard, this budget request builds on the many cost-cutting reforms we passed last year in the Affordable Care Act. I am glad to see, unlike the majority’s resolution, this budget continue to move us forward on health care.

On the well being of our children, your budget is very strong and I want to thank you for that. As with Secretary Duncan’s budget for the Department of Education, which we discussed yesterday, this request also emphasizes the vital importance of early learning in determining child outcomes, and, unlike the majority’s budget, it makes important investments in child care and Head Start.

I cannot stress the importance of Head Start enough. For more than 45 years, Head Start has provided comprehensive child development, literacy, and family services to over 27 million pre-schoolers from low-income and working poor families. Nearly one million children and their families are served every year. It is unquestionably the most effective early childhood development program ever developed. I am glad to see this continued critical investment.

And on Administration on Aging, I appreciate that although you do not propose an overall increase, you have several good initiatives, including one on elder justice. This is in contrast to what we find in the majority’s budget, which would cut the Administration on Aging and impact senior nutrition programs, potentially eliminating up to 10 million new meals delivered to the homebound elderly.

I am also pleased that, unlike the budget put forward by the majority here in the House, this request invests in continued medical research at the National Institutes of Health.

Every dollar invested in the NIH has more than a two-fold return on investment – creating jobs and stimulating the local economy while working to improve the health of Americans. And as a cancer survivor who has felt firsthand the power of this research to save lives, I cannot thank you enough for this commitment to the future.

Thanks to NIH research, the prognosis for a woman diagnosed with breast cancer has improved greatly over the past 25 years. The cure rate for childhood leukemia is now 80 percent. We have seen the approval of the cervical cancer vaccine. And though one in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, the translation of research has improved the survival rate to just over 99%. The death rates from cardiovascular disease have dropped nearly 70% in the last 30 years. All of this is due in large part to NIH-sponsored research.

So, as a whole, there is much I agree with in this request. To take another example, I strongly support the move to decrease the stigma of mental health services by recognizing their value in community health centers and primary care. This is a move that is long overdue.

Just last week the Administration released a report that, among other alarming estimates, noted that not even one in three women experiencing depression has seen a mental health professional in the last 12 months! There is a health center in my state of Connecticut that is leading the way in this integration, and I hope to hear more about how it can help our constituents' health, pocketbooks, and quality of life.

I do have some concerns about some of the cuts in this budget request – particularly to Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which so many families in my area rely on; and to the community service block grant. I voted against a proposal by the majority to eliminate CSBG, but I also disagree with the 50 percent reduction that you propose. I believe these cuts will have harmful consequences for American families, our workforce, and the economy.

I am also concerned with the proposed elimination of The Children's Hospital Graduate Medical

Education, or CHGME. This is a critical and modest investment we make as a nation to ensure we are training of the next generation of physicians that will care for children. I hope we can discuss the wisdom of all of these cuts today.

So we have much to talk about. With that in mind, thank you again for coming today, and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.

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